

NORTHERN NEVADA ADULT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
POLICY AND PROCEDURE DIRECTIVE

SUBJECT: ETHICS

NUMBER: NN-LD-03

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REVIEW/REVISE DATE: 06/08/95, 10/15/98, 01/03/02, 02/1/07, 2/18/10

APPROVAL: _____ Rosalyn Reynolds {s} _____, Agency Director

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#### I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to define the reporting and follow up of ethical issues at Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services (NNAMHS) as they relate to consumers and staff.

#### II. POLICY

Healthy interpersonal boundaries between employees, contract providers, and consumers are essential for the appropriate emotional and therapeutic support of people receiving services. It is the policy of Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services (NNAMHS) to have in place a mechanism to deal with ethical issues surrounding health care that are brought to the attention of Administration to meet the commitment of providing the highest quality of care to all consumers.

#### III. REFERENCES

1. Division of Mental Health and Developmental Services Policy #4.037 Professional Behavior of Division Employees

## 2. NNAMHS Policy NN-HR-12 Conscious Conflicts

### III. PROCEDURE

1. All new employees and contract providers of NNAMHS will review this policy in new employee orientation.
2. All licensed and certified professional employees, including but not limited to nurses, counselors, psychologists, psychiatrists, physicians, social workers and therapists shall be accountable for following the ethical standards, statutes and regulations of their respective licensing boards, as well as these procedures.
3. Expectations of professional behavior include, but are not limited to:
  - a. No involvement in dual relationships that could involve emotional involvement or exploitation.
  - b. Employees or contract providers shall not impose their personal values or attempt to convert agency consumers to adopt or affiliate with any organized group, sect, religious or political ideology or organization.
  - c. Employees or contract providers shall avoid revealing their personal information with consumers. This includes address or home phone number. If there is a specific therapeutic reason for disclosing this information, the supervisor will approve and the reason for disclosure will be documented in the consumer's record.
  - d. If an individual known to an employee or contract provider is admitted to treatment, the supervisor should determine steps to assure that professional boundaries are maintained and no conflict of interest occurs.
  - e. An employee or contract provider shall not knowingly establish or engage in a personal relationship with agency consumers, family members, or the consumers significant others.
  - f. Personal relationships are prohibited between an employee or provider and former agency consumers with whom a therapeutic relationship has occurred.
  - g. Employees or contract providers shall not engage in romantic relationships or sexual activity with agency consumers or former agency consumers with whom a therapeutic relationship was established, regardless of the time lapse since termination of the

therapeutic relationship.

- h. Employees shall not engage in sexual activity within the agency or on the property where they are assigned to work.
  - i. Employees and contract providers shall not engage in business relationships with agency consumers or former consumers as long as there is or has been a therapeutic relationship, including, but not limited to loaning or borrowing of money, trading, bartering, or profiting from sale of goods to the consumer.
  - j. As a general rule, employees or contract providers shall not accept money, gifts, services, or special privileges in any amount from agency consumers or others with whom those consumers have close personal relationships. Exceptions include personal interactions that occur in the context of events in which staff, consumers, and families participate together, such as holiday parties, social events connected with the therapeutic environment, agency, or unit.
  - k. Employees or contract providers who wish to donate money or tangibles to agency consumers shall do so anonymously through designated non-profit contractor or vendor agency.
  - l. Employees or contract providers shall not perform work related activities on behalf of consumers on their personal time without prior permission from their supervisor.
4. Violations of these described behaviors may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Sexual activity with current or former consumers will require a recommendation of dismissal by the Agency Director.
5. Reporting of Ethical violations
- a. Reporting of ethical violations will be reported through the incident reporting system.
  - b. Ethical issues are discussed on a monthly basis at the Core Leadership Meeting. Members of the Core Leadership team will determine any actions required as a result of this incident.
    - 1. The Performance Improvement Coordinator will be responsible for monitoring the completion of any corrective action Plan.
    - 2. Personnel issues will be discussed in general terms and the name of the

involved employees or consumers will not be shared during the review of these events. This information is the purview of the Human Resources Department.